(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the number of cases relating to import of plant products cleared since June, 1991?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) and (b). Yes Sir. With effect from 20th January, 1992, the Government has relaxed the requirement of Import Permit for the consignments of plant and plant materials imported for consumption purposes and the requirement of Import Permit, Phytosanitary Certificate for the consignments of plant/plant materials imported as an accompanied baggage and through international postal channel have also ben relaxed without compromising with the plant quarantine procedures.

(c) A total number of 9,755 cases (consignments ) of plants and plant products have been cleared after the required quarantine screening upto 31st january, 1992.

[*English*]

**Deficit in Oil Industry Pool Accounts**

2732. SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT:
SHRI SANAT KUMAR MANDAL:

Will the Minister of PERTOLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the cumulative deficit in oil Industry Pool Accounts has gone to thousands crores of rupees;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and the reasons therefor; and

(c) the remedial measures being taken in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND) (a) to (d). Oil Pool Account has incurred sizable deficits from 1989-90, mainly on account of sales realisations not fully covering the costs incurred. The situation is being monitored continuously.

**Boycott of Elections by Political parties in Punjab**

2733. SHRI GURUDAS KAMAT:
SHRI RABI RAY;
SHRI K.D. SULTANPURI:

Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether some political parties boycotted the elections held in Punjab recently;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor; and

(c) the parties which boycotted the elections?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS AND THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI M.M. JACOB): (a) and (b). Some political parties boycotted elections held in punjab recently, possibly under pressure from militants.

(c) While national parties like Congress-I. BJP, CPI, CPI (M) and Janta Dal as well as Shiromani Akali Dal (Kalul) participated in the elections. SAD (Mann), SAD (Badal), SAD (Roade-Baba) and ASSIF (Manjit ) boycotted the elections.

**Return of Indians to Kuwait**

2734. SHRI KODIKKUNIL SURESH: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indians who have returned to Kuwait so far;

(b) the number of Indians working in Kuwait at present; and

(c) the facilities provided by the government for the return of Indians to Kuwait?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI MADHAVSINH SOLANKI): (a) 68,000 Indians have returned to Kuwait so far,

(b) The number of Indians working in Kuwait is estimated at 65,000.

(c) Government have taken various steps to facilitate and speed the return of the Indian nationals repatriated from the Gulf; these include waiver of immigration Clearance Requirement, speedier issuance of passports and reintroduction of Air India flights to Kuwait.

**Petroleum And Natural Gas Projects for Kerala**

2735. SHRI KODIKKUNIL SURESH: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) the details of the petroleum and natural Gas projects for Kerala pending with the Union Government for approval;

(b) the action taken so far in each case; and

(c) the reason for the delay?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI B. SHANKARANAND); (a) to (c). The following two project proposals are at different stages of consideration of the Government.

(i) Expansion of the refining capacity of the Cochin Refineries Limited; and

(ii) Increasing capacity for additional Benzene production by cochin Refineries Limited.

**World bank aid to Oilpalm cultivation in Kerala**

2736. SHRI KUDIKUNNIL SURESH: Will the Minister of AGRICULTURE be pleased to state:

(a) whether the World Bank aided scheme to grow Oilpalm trees in Kerala is in progress;

(b) if so, the cost of the scheme;

(c) the places where this scheme is under operation in that state;

(d) whether the Government propose to cover more places under this scheme in Kerala; and

(e) if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE (SHRI MULLAPALLY RAMACHANDRAN): (a) There is no World Bank aided scheme for oil palm in Kerala.

(b) to (e). Do not arise.

**Increase in Prices of Food Grade Hexane**

2737. SHRI ARJUN CHARAN SETHI: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether any decision has been taken to increase the prices of food grade hexane a crucial input for manufacturing Solvent extracted vegetable oils and deoiled meals; and

(b) if so, the reasons therefore?

THE MINISTER OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS SHRI B. SHANKARANAND): (a) and (b). Hexane is not a price administred product. Oil Industry determines the of Hexane on market considerations.

**Girls Hostels for Scheduled Caste Students**

2738. SHRI DHARMABIKASHAM: Will the Minister of WELFARE be pleased to state: